

Application No. 09/712,175

Reply to Office Action

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Official Action mailed April 21, 2004, Applicants amend their application and request consideration. In lieu of the presently pending appeal, Applicants file with this Amendment a Request for Continued Examination. An Information Disclosure Statement, citing references recently received in communication with a foreign patent office, also accompanies this Amendment. Claims 2-6, 8, 9, and 12-17 are canceled and claim 18 is added, so that claims 1, 7, 10, 11, and 18 are now pending. No new matter has been added.

Claim 1 is amended to include the limitations of canceled claim 6. Claim 7 is amended to depend from claim 1. Claim 11 is amended to include the limitations of canceled claim 15. Claim 18 is added to duplicate the limitations of claim 10 as dependent from claim 7.

The Official Action rejects claims 1-8, 10 and 12-17 as anticipated by Fukuda et al. (US Patent 6,163,318, hereinafter "Fukuda"). That rejection is respectfully traversed.

Fukuda fails to teach every limitations of amended claim 1. For example, Fukuda fails to teach *a timer for measuring, for each of the plurality of windows, a time during which the arbitrary window is selected by the input means, wherein the managing means outputs the processing requests to the respective programmable controllers corresponding to the respective windows at output periods that are based on the times that have been measured by the timer.* In the Amendment filed February 2, 2004, Applicants argued with respect to claim 6 that Fukuda does not teach a timer of any kind. The Examiner attempted to rebut this contention by noting that Fukuda discloses a "subroutine program forming the process of the windows in steps at a time formation," citing column 4, lines 51-57 of Fukuda. The only relevance the cited disclosure has to amended claim 1 (which now includes the limitations of examined claim 6) is that it includes the word "time." Nothing in Fukuda teaches a device for measuring time. Moreover, even if Fukuda taught a timer, Fukuda clearly fails to teach a timer for measuring a time during which an arbitrary window is selected. Fukuda clearly cannot anticipate amended claim 1, which recites the timer. Accordingly, the rejection should be withdrawn.

The Official Action rejects claims 9 and 11 as unpatentable over the combination of Fukuda and Ho et al. (US Patent 5,739,821, hereinafter "Ho"). That rejection is respectfully traversed.

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The combination of Fukuda and Ho fails to teach or suggest every limitation of amended claim 11. For example, the combination fails to teach *measuring and accumulating, with a timer, for each of the plurality of windows, a time during which the arbitrary window is selected with the input means, wherein the processing requests are output at output periods that are based on the times that have been measured with the timer*. As argued above with respect to claim 6, Fukuda fails to teach or suggest measuring a time during which an arbitrary window is selected, as recited in amended claim 11. Ho also fails to teach or suggest this limitation. Accordingly, nothing in the combination of Fukuda and Ho teaches a device for measuring time. Moreover, even if that combination taught a timer, the combination clearly fails to teach measuring a time during which an arbitrary window is selected. Thus, the combination of Fukuda and Ho clearly fails to teach or suggest amended claim 11. Accordingly, prima facie obviousness has not been established, and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, as well as prompt allowance of the pending claims, are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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